



Kent County Report

Regional Airport Authority Proposal Takes Flight

Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GRFIA) took another step forward towards becoming a regional airport authority on February 12, 2015. The Kent County Board of Commissioners approved draft legislation which would allow for local units of government to create regional authorities, and to define the powers, duties and obligations associated with the transfer of airport operations to such authorities.



Current state law does not allow for counties to appoint authorities with representation from outside the county. As a result, it is necessary to develop draft legislation which would allow for local units of government to create regional authorities, and to define the powers, duties and obligations associated with the transfer of airport operations to such authorities.

Proposed legislation addresses issues that include appointment, removal, and composition of an authority board, the powers of an authority (including the ability to issue debt and expressly prohibiting the ability to levy a tax) and the manner and scope of transfer of operations, assets, liabilities, and employees.

Board Chair Dan Koorndyk created the Airport Authority Transition Work Group in October 2014 to develop a plan that could lead to the transition of the governance from Kent County to a newly-formed regional airport authority. The Work Group was reappointed in January 2015.



We are excited to announce the first edition of *Kent County Report*, a newsletter that will be sent every other month on behalf of the Kent County Board of Commissioners and Administrator's Office.

It is our hope that the information contained in these newsletters will keep you informed about important issues in Kent County.

Feel free to share, and thank you for making Kent County a great place to live, work and play.

2015 Legislative Priorities Approved



Every year the Kent County Board of Commissioners compiles a list of Legislative Priorities. These items were approved by the Board of Commissioners February 12, 2015 to be shared with state lawmakers from West Michigan, to ensure our Kent County voices are heard in Lansing. Several members of the Board and Administrator's Office met with lawmakers to share this list of priorities.

greater than 600,000 residents (Kent, Macomb, Oakland and/or Wayne) for various regionalization efforts (i.e. Community Action Agencies, PIHP/CMH, Health Departments, Court Administration, ISDs, etc.)

6. Veterans Legislation that clarifies role of Veterans' Affairs Committee:

Kent County supports legislation that clarifies the role of a Veterans' Affairs Committee (VAC) and ensures that Boards of Commissioners maintain responsibility for the managerial and fiscal operations of a county Veteran's Affairs department.

7. Sentencing Reform: Kent County encourages the Legislature to engage local Sheriffs and Judges in a review of the report and the impact of the recommendations on local communities, jails and county budgets prior to enacting any additional Legislation to implement the report's recommendations.

In addition to the new priorities, the board also shared priorities from 2014 that are unresolved:

- 1. Opt-Out of Tax Capture Districts**
- 2. Capture of Designated Millages**
- 3. Revenue Sharing Maintained**
- 4. Eliminate Unfunded Mandates**
- 5. Limit Liability on Inmate Medical Expenses**
- 6. Mental Health Funding**

1. Airport Authority: Kent County supports legislation to amend the Aeronautics Code by adding a new chapter (regional airport authority act).

2. Court Funding: Kent County encourages the Legislature to begin to address issues related to Court fees.

3. Probate Court Inventory Fees: Kent County supports legislation to maintain the increase in the County's percentage of Probate Court Inventory Fees.

4. Child Welfare/Performance Based Funding One-Time Costs: Kent County supports funding for One-Time Technology & Risk Reserve Costs associated with the State-Mandated Child Welfare Performance Based Consortia.

5. Regionalization Opt-Out for Large Four Counties: Kent County supports legislation that provides opt-outs for counties



Veterans Services Getting New Home

The Kent County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved renovations for new offices for the Kent County Department of Veterans Affairs (KCDVA). Starting this spring, services will be provided at 836 Fuller NE, located on just north of I-196 in Grand Rapids. Funding for the project comes from the County's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) fund – and not from the recently passed Veterans Dedicated Millage.

The Veterans Affairs Office, currently located at 82 Ionia, is in need of a facility that is more accommodating to its Veteran clientele. "This location will help our veterans and their family members access much-needed services," said Carrie Roy, Director of Kent County Department of Veterans Affairs. "The site on Fuller NE offers on-site parking, including handicap spaces steps from the main

entry, and a more visible location, with more square footage." The building, located at 836 Fuller NE in Grand Rapids, previously housed the Area Community Service Employment and Training Council (ACSET); the cost to retrofit the facility for the KCDVA is \$90,000.

Kent County voters approved a millage in November to fund expanding services for veterans. The millage generates slightly over \$1 million for increased outreach and emergency services, and allows the KCDVA to more than double the hours that staff work on federal claims assistance. The move is scheduled to be complete by April 1, 2015.

For more information regarding the services provided through the Kent County Veterans Affairs, go to: www.kentveterans.org.

More Patrols in Plainfield Township

The Kent County Board of Commissioners approved increasing the number Sheriff Deputies assigned to covering Plainfield Township, and dedicating a Community Resource Officer (CRO) to the township. The vote comes after a review found the recent law enforcement service levels were not enough to meet citizens' needs.

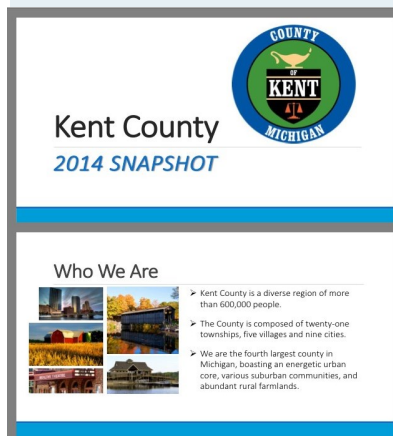
Last year, the Plainfield Township Public Safety Review Committee reviewed statistics regarding response times, as well as time spent at various calls, report writing, and engaging in preventative patrols. The review found Plainfield Township residents required 10,751 hours of service from the Kent County Sheriff Department, but their contract allowed for 8,544 hours of service. The agreement, approved in February, calls for one Road Patrol Officer to be assigned to cover calls in Plainfield Township sixteen hours per day, seven days a week; the dedicated CRO will work in Plainfield Township forty hours per week. Plainfield Township agreed to cover the total cost of the officers' wages and benefits.

2014 Snapshot

The Administrator's Office put together 2014 Snapshot, an overview of some of the great accomplishments that took place in Kent County in 2014.

This report is posted on accessKent and is available at:

[2014 Snapshot.](#)



Governor's "River" Modeled after Kent Programs

Governor Rick Snyder plans to merge the Department of Human Services and Department of Community Health into a single Health & Human Services Department. The Governor's goals of the merger and his "River of Opportunity" image intersect quite well with what has been happening in Kent County. He identified several local initiatives that the State is patterning its reforms after:

- Pathways to Potential modeled after Kent School Services Network (KSSN);
- The need to monitor chronic absenteeism, another KSSN initiative;
- Cascade Engineering's partnership with DHS, which has been replicated locally in the SOURCE;
- The imperative to improve 3rd grade reading proficiency via a community response which aligns with KConnect's common agenda.

These examples happen because of the vision and partnerships between our local public systems – network180, Kent ISD, Kent DHS, 17th Circuit Court, Health Department, and Board of Commissioners/County Administration – as well as our partnerships with private and philanthropic organizations. These partnerships have shown a commitment to finding better ways to serve our community by utilizing existing resources in creative fashions to serve the entire family. Key to this has been the tone set by the Kent County Family & Children's Coordinating Council, appointed by the Board of Commissioners. While there is always more work to do, it looks like we are on a path being recognized by others as efficient and effective.

Kent County Board of Commissioners & Administrator's Office

300 Monroe Avenue NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

www.accessKent.com

Kent County Mission Statement

The mission of Kent County government is to be an effective and efficient steward in delivering quality services for our diverse community. Our priority is to provide mandated services, which may be enhanced and supplemented by additional services to improve the quality of life for all our citizens within the constraints of sound fiscal policy.

